

VA

Interview with Winfred Knowles
in Eastham, Massachusetts

Interview #2

by Angela Riedel and
Sadie Flint
May 7, 1981

Q: The interview with Winnie Knowles. At this time it's May 7, 1981, in his home on Bridge Road. The two interviewers are Sadie Flint and Angela Riedel.

Let's get some dates straight before we proceed. The good stories we heard on the last tape about the getting of civilian defense here would be starting in 1938, as you recall, and then from that grew your appointment as a police officer, was an outgrowth of that. Now, how did that proceed?

Winfred Knowles: On the police appointment?

Q: Yes. You were just an intermittent police person?

Winfred Knowles: That's a funny question, because I certainly volunteered for that job. I asked to be appointed a police officer, because a special police officer has all he can do, what a chief tells him to do. And I was Chairman of Selectmen under those laws at that time, no department should be Chairman of the Police, and had nothing to do with it, and so they appointed me a police officer,

which I wouldn't have to ask anyone. I could from him.

And that went along into '46. Then some kind of a national-- that's the first paint job I had. I made a lot of money that year. I got twenty-six dollars.

Q: As a police officer?

Knowles: My first police was twenty-six dollars a year.

Q: How did you get paid? How did you sell it?

Knowles: They used to pay then twice a month. Yes, twice a month, the middle of the month.

Q: Did they pay you only when you had a need to be a police officer?

Knowles: Well, I put the bill in, whatever they owed me.

Q: I see. How did you determine that?

Knowles: From the hour of the time I was called. This was on special work.

Q: I was wondering. It was just as you were needed that you worked?

Knowles: I got *make any difference* where I was. If the call came through, I stopped whatever I was-- now I worked with Mr. Pierce down here, who was a contractor. I had an agreement

with him. Otherwise, I wouldn't have been Chief if I hadn't. When I get the call, I leave and go. That's when my time starts. Instead of town wages of fifty cents an hour, I'd get what I was getting as a carpenter till I came back.

Q: And what kinds of calls would you get?

Knowles: Well, that's a funny-- I don't know just what you mean, what kind of a call. Be accidents or anything in violation of the laws.

Q: Would there be breakins? Somebody might break in a house?

very little of that.

Knowles: No, they were mostly automobile accidents. Through that period of time, and boy, we had some lulus. They were real accidents in those days.

And from that point it went on-- we lost or I wouldn't have had a job if they hadn't let me go and then come back. Now, that started in 1946, and it was 1953 when the Selectmen appointed me. They got tired of trying to be Chief. Of course, the rules and regulations are altogether different now. So they appointed me as Chief.

Now, the Chief of the Department, under the Chapter-- we was under 97-- the Selectmen, the Chairman of the Selectmen, has to make rules and regulations for the Department. So in 1954 the price for part-time was pretty high. It increased from forty-six. Up each year about the same thing. You know, the way it is now.

And they thought it was quite high, although they couldn't find fault with it, 'cause it was special. So I suggested, you give me a patrol car and there's enough money in there for special work, would give me enough to have the patrol car and have me twenty-four hours a day.

That's where I made a mistake, when I said they could have me for twenty-four hours a day. Christ, they kept me on that for nine years.

Q: That's incredible. Do you remember what your salary was then?

Knowles: Yes. Thirty-five hundred dollars.

Q: For twenty-four hours a day. Seven days a week?

Knowles: Oh, sure.

Q: Whenever you were needed.

Knowles: You know, in nine years I had four weeks vacation.

Q: Did you have anybody under you as a helper?

Knowles: I started in on that special work, with Bob Deschamps, my son-in-law, for night calls. I refused to go out in the car at night any more. I'm scared of the dark.

Q: I'm sure.

Knowles: When you get in a dark corner some time, you don't know

what you're up against. (LAUGHTER)

somebody with me. And that's the thing that paid off. ^{Bob} And/worked with me about fifteen years, and then a beautiful citizen they had in Eastham complained to Washington that he was working police work.

Q: Oh, because he was also the postmaster?

Knowles: Want the story?

Q: Yes, sure.

Knowles: He wrote to Washington about Bob Deschamps, the postmaster, doing police work. And he got an answer, and he called me up one day.

wanted to meet me. And I said, all right. What time? He told me. And they came up to the old station and he passed me a letter. I knew what the letter was. He didn't know that I knew it. But I did, 'cause ^{told me. As regards} to him working as a police officer, from the head man in Washington, the Postmaster General.

And he passed me the letter. I'd like for you to read this. And I looked and the address of who the letter was written to had been cut off. And I took his letter-- just like that! When I got through with it, there was probably a hundred pieces or more of that letter. I threw it in the wastebasket.

I said-- well, I wouldn't want to tell you what I said to him.

(LAUGHTER)

I told him

I said, you had a hell of a nerve to pass me a letter to read and you cut the address. What are you scared of?

And that's what some of the citizens in this town got.

I said, but I've got a letter in my pocket I want you to read. I passed it to him, and you read it out loud. I want the Selectmen to listen. , you know.

I had permission from the Postmaster General that Bob Deschamps could work as a police officer.

Q: Aha! So he was your mainstay then during that period?

Knowles: Mm-hmm. Now, that went on for a little while and Bob kept a-working, and the Inspectors at Washington came down to see him about it. He says, what the hell, you gave me permission to work.

So they went on and he was riding in the car, and then finally he bought it, it was another letter. And it came back, it would smooth things up if he would be just a kind of administrative department or something like that. Well, I figured out that I could use him to train younger specials about riding in the cruiser. Not making any arrests, but just doing the right thing.

And that guy wrote another letter, that he was still riding the cruiser, and they asked me about it. I said, well, he was just in there. I got him in there. He's part of the administration,

used to train officers. That's all. He doesn't write up citations. He's just riding, he's doing his job.

Well, Bob got disgusted with the whole thing, 'cause although he had the permission-- they couldn't stop me giving him permission, so he just resigned after fifteen years. And that went on from that point.

Then, as I say, in 1954 things had increased and they decided to vote the Police Department. And things were pretty rough at that time. The Town of Eastham's insurance on cars was a third more than any other town on Cape Cod, because we was noted as a dangerous area.

Q: Because of Route 6?

Knowles: Yeah. So many accidents in town had made it a dangerous area. Accidents. And in 1955, there was thirty-one people killed on Cape Cod from Provincetown to Falmouth that summer. Summer people. And the people themselves got along. I don't know whether you heard of it or not, Sadie, the Barnstable County Citizens Safety Committee? Did you ever hear of that one?

Well, lots of people in Barnstable County got together. We've got to do something about that. We can't have that . And the State had some meetings on it, and we had it up in this Town Hall. The Selectmen from all the towns and anyone else who was down and decided to speak, was supposed to be. And they went around, different ones.

That was the night things, that one officer, well, he felt as if we should allow five miles an hour, whatever it might be set. Another fellow thought ten miles an hour would be good. And I have to be a little bit different than people.

So it come around to old Rollins of Chatham, who was Chief, and he and I were pretty good pals. Had the same principles, I guess. So he asked me about it and I said, I don't care. If we vote a speed limit, that's gonna be it. Not one mile over or two. It's gonna be what it says. And I don't see why any police officer has any right to allow anybody anything. The law says it's so. So he's in violation, isn't he? Whether it's one mile or five. Same thing. He's over the speed limit.

And I says, if this thing is passed and the signs go up, those signs are going to mean just exactly what they say. They always have.

So we finally decided on forty miles an hour. I said, that's it.

I worked alone from-- well, I say working alone, I did a lot of work the first year on that, 'cause they felt, after the wrecks the year before, that it was going to hurt the summer season and all, that dangerous highway.

So I started out and I posted some signs, the roads gonna be patrolled. I put it in the paper first, I was gonna enforce it. And it's the most comfortable job, you know. You drive around and it's quiet and peaceful on the highway. But always drive on the speed limit in the right lane. Watch the mirror. You see some

funny things in the mirror sometimes. Sometimes you look at yourself, huh? (LAUGHTER)

So you set that watch in the mirror and you'll see 'em come up behind you. Then you see them edge off to pass you.

When I was driving along like this and out of the corner of that eye, on that side of the road, the passing side, when you see the hood of the front end of that car, brush the vision from that eye, you just-- all you had to do was just wave him back. Simple. So you trot back and give them a warning. And . now and then. There's all kinds of things that work on these people. You know, there are beautiful people you meet on that highway. Wonderful people. God, they're sorry. Things happen, but they won't happen again. And all those things, you know.

Q: You've heard a lot of stories.

Knowles: And after a while, you know, you give 'em a citation, a warning, don't get caught again, and you pass them and away they go, happy as a clam.

So they get a little ways and they get just so far, then I jump in the cruiser and tail 'em. We don't have to go very far. Soon as they look and they don't see the cruiser behind 'em, Whoosh, away they go.

Get 'em the second time, and that's where my meanness and stupidity comes out.

Q: But you had warned them.

Knowles: So you get 'em the second time, seven days suspension of license. After that happened a few times, then the story got to going. Now the public can help and they don't know it, because there was town talk all over the lot, what was going on in Eastham. That poor old chief there, tearing the roads up, and everything else you could think of.

And then it started in when one of the Selectmen one time-- the new one, Mr. Nelson it was-- and he told me one day he heard that I was sneaky. I was mean, I was everything you could think of. I said, that's right. One eye's on the people who are driving past me think I'm pretty good.

But they didn't believe those things. Well, my God, they have 'em. So I had another one what I used to work at times and get a guy who's going a little bit. And all of a sudden, I'm sorry, I didn't see any sign. Didn't see any sign? Well, I asked him, he didn't see the ^{speed} street sign? No. All right, turn your car around, go back a mile and a half, then come back and tell me what you've seen on the signs on the right-hand side of the road.

Well, that worked pretty good. They'd kind of get a foolish grin on their face, you know. That's just one of those things, you know,

.

And those are the things. You had to work all kinds of tricks, and I always figured, if you're playing the game, I'd play to win. I won that game.

Well, I got this town down in that one year of 1956-- in the first six months of '55, I had forty-eight accidents. The last day of July, 1956, I'd had four. That's all for the season.

Q: That was proof of your

Knowles: And by getting that speed down, it cut down the insurance policies. So I asked for a reduction and he said, we're sorry, we can't give it to you under one year. That's gotta write for three years to get the reduction. He says, if you keep it down next year, we'll get it on the third year, renew it. Well, I kept it down.

By doing that, the jury figured it out. The people in this town wrote saved twenty thousand dollars on insurances because we were up high.

Q: Not to mention the lives of the people.

Knowles: I don't know what it is now. When I retired, things were in pretty good condition.

Q: When did you retire?

Knowles: 1968. The old town, as the fellow says-- I was advertised in Canada, California, all over the country, because Motor Vehicle Association notified all their customers. If you're going through Eastham, the laws are strictly obeyed. In other words, you want to make it more. Someone didn't mark the slow

Q: Did you have any other kinds of problems that come to mind?

The traffic was the main one, I'm sure.

Knowles: Well, traffic jams I wouldn't say was too much of a problem the way we handled it.

Q: After you handled it successfully.

Knowles: There was only one way to handle it. But we'd always get somebody who would take it in their hands to pass you.

And by doing that, then I picked up everywhere. Made no difference to me whether it was California or where he was from. They was all used alike.

Q: I think the fairness of it must have gotten through to them too.

Knowles:

Q: Were there any dramatic things that stand out in terms of other kinds of problems that a police chief had?

Knowles: Well, on this speed trap thing, it was kind of comical.

your identification, officer. We was standing in a telephone booth down in North Eastham. We must have been smashed and we was taking on this about half past eleven, and toot, toot, toot, toot, out. I says, come on, let's go.

We picked him up and who do you suppose that guy was? District Court Judge. And I said, give me your license and registration. Right away, he says, you know I tooted my horn so you'd know who

Give me your license and registration. And I wrote him up. Like
. Give him a warning. He says, you're giving
me that? Christ, that's your name, isn't it? Take it and don't
ask any questions. Tomorrow morning I have a guy in court for
speeding. You were doing sixty-five miles an hour. What's your
answer to that, Judge? I says, you or anybody else, Judge, no
special privileges in Eastham. Don't get caught again.

Q: Did he ever?

Knowles: No. And, on the other hand, on the-- later, when the
Probation Officer retired, I was invited out to a testimonial dinner
for him. He promised that, and that was the only
Bobby Walsh's . He was a kook.

He said he didn't know. I stopped him once. He got the same
thing. There's two Judges, the regular Judge and the

. He says, I don't know, Chief Knowles one night
stopped me. Well, I always wondered, when he was walking up toward
the car, if you recognized me, and I always wondered what I should
say to him and what he was going to ask me. This is a Judge.

So he came up and he didn't say much. He asked for my license
and registration. Wrote it up and give me a citation and then he
says, what's the idea that you're speeding? He didn't recognize
any word that he was a Judge. And he said he had to think of the
stories he'd heard in court, and he said the one he used, he said
the one I used on Chief Knowles was that my wife had called, my
little baby at home was sick and she wanted me to get home as soon

as I could. That's an old story in the courtroom.

He said, I don't know now whether he recognized me or not.

And I said, Judge, you never will know, and I never will tell you.

(LAUGHTER)

Now, I heard another one one night. It was during the blackout, and when the war was on, and I used to work till one o'clock in the morning on that, and that's when your headlights were blacked out. Half the top lens was painted.

And we had orders from the Navy or Army what to do

. So Leslie Chase used to come up.

Leslie Chase would come up, he was the Town Clerk, and work with me. We worked nights, in the evening till one o'clock.

This car came down about eleven o'clock, was tearing, and I stopped him. Along the back seat of that car was gold enough in there that'd make a man rich two or three times. Gold bricks and-- I don't know, this and that, Army official, big boys, with a copper for a driver.

And I asked the guy for his license and registration and he gave it to me. Then I said, what's the idea? Headlights all bright, speeding, going like hell. He said, I have an emergency message from the Commander at Camp Wellfleet and I have a delivery. I said, let me see it. He said, I can't show it to you. I said, I know you can't. I want to see the envelope. He hands me the envelope, it has three stamps on it, wax stamps. One on within

an inch of the end and one in the center. All I wanted to see was the envelope. And he didn't have it. So we did a write-up. On the back seat was two boys-- and I said, well, you're not going to . I don't know what they're going to do about it. I said, I know. They'll do without you.

So I turned them around, across the street from the , and they set there and they set there, and I went over and I said, gee, you fellows been here a long time. Is there anything I can do to help you? And one of the boys with the gold braid, he said, we're making up our report.

And Leslie Chase was pretty peeved . He said, you hadn't ought to have stopped those fellows. He didn't like it at all, Leslie didn't. He was scared of the outfit.

And I said, that's okay, what kind of report you making up? He said, we have been stopped by seventeen officers before you stopped us. Everywhere they let us go. You didn't.

Selectmen got a nice letter from the Army on that.

They were spotters. Officers were sent in that blackout to see seventeen officers. When we found one, we got a message to Camp Wellfleet. Well, go ahead. But they didn't get by Eastham.

And all those things give me a little puff, you know. I had the orders in my pocket. And Leslie, he didn't know that either. I said, well, I got orders in my pocket from the Army, what to do

with these guys. I'd do it anyway, whether I had orders or not, if it's a violation, which it was.

So that got through to the Army and stuff, I guess, pretty well.

Q: What other things were defense measures besides the headlights being blacked off? What sorts of things?

Knowles: Well, the only thing on that was no bright lights. We was doing it on account of signals over here in the ocean from submarines.

Q: Did everyone's house have to have blackout curtains as well?

Knowles: Yes. And the speed limit had to be down.

Q: Because you couldn't see as well, for one thing. Did you have to go around to various people's homes that weren't cooperating and speak to them, or did everybody pitch in?

Knowles: No, I didn't go around. They knew what the law was, and if they wanted to disobey, that's up to them. When they would get out on the road-- we had pretty good help as far as that was concerned. Not too many. Once in a while. But when you see a car like those fellows coming, with bright lights, throwing high beams, . And they're just out to see what's going to happen.

Q: I think that was neat that you picked them up. Were people in Eastham generally afraid that there might be a submarine attack?

Knowles: Was they afraid?

Q: Yes.

Knowles: I don't know whether they were afraid or not. I can't answer the question. I know we did a lot of watching and finally located-- we located the guy in Eastham.

Now, I never knew-- I had another officer with me nights when we used to go out, and with me and I was told

going out nights with you. How do you dare? You should know
scared of the dark. I said, so am I.

(LAUGHTER)

And I tell you one person, we used to travel-- we traveled through a , Sadie. Well, they could of shot us or tripped us. They could have done anything they wanted to us. And that was over to We used to sneak in there in that path. They had a path. It was through all those woods, to get to the shore. Long steps, way down to the bottom.

And I says to this fellow I was telling about, this guy who was with me, how scared he was going around some of those nights. I said, he's scared of his own shadow. And I said, I'm going to tell you something, Mister. If you want to go out with us, I bet I'll take you through a path that you'll be scared of your shadow

too, 'cause all those guys have got to do is trip you and they've gotcha. Pitch dark. In a wooded area.

But there was someone inland was accepting those and giving signals. And they all come between eleven o'clock and quarter past.

Now they had FBI men. FBI men over on Doane Road, over at Nauset, you know. You could drive right by, we didn't know you boys was hiding. So ^{hollered} we howled as we went by, we'd holler to them, because pine trees. He's under a pine tree somewhere, we didn't know where. You know, always a .

So they took the range one night. It was the first down in North Eastham, of a high window, you know. Second story house. Course, the woods weren't grown up the same as they are now. Were clear. They followed that and there was a certain man in town, in North Eastham, he was never seen again. After that, we didn't get any more signals. I knew the man. I knew who he was, and nobody knows. He went away somewhere. No one knew where he's gone. I guess they didn't know where he'd gone. I don't think they know who took him.

Q: Were these light signals or short-wave signals or what?
What kind of signals were they?

Knowles: Flashes.

Q: Light flashes?

Knowles: Flashlight. Signalling by flashlight.

Q: That meant somebody was offshore then?

Knowles: That meant a submarine was offshore. And they were flashin' him and he was taking their messages.

Q: You think he was sending his own as well?

Knowles: Sure. We never had any flashes from offshore after that. They used to lay aground Hemenways Landing . I was up there at them cottages, the further one down, the only one in there at that time, and I didn't see anybody around there. All of a sudden a car drove out of there. Oh-oh. Just radioed to the cruiser to go get 'em. Funny things happen at night after dark, don't they?

Q: Was this during World War II then?

Knowles: Yes. Yes, funny things are happening.

Q: But it wasn't a Lover's Lane type thing, it was definitely something else?

Knowles: They was just a couple that was out.

Q: Oh, it was a Lover's Lane kind of thing then.

Knowles: They had to be checked out. Sometimes you wished you hadn't seen 'em. (LAUGHTER)

But they have to go through it. On the whole business, I used to

play a game. I played to win. And I can say it now, I won the battle.

Q: I'll say you did on the traffic. Was there any kind of other crime that you could think of?

Knowles: Oh, at that time we never had any serious stuff. Juvenile stuff and things like that. Some drinking. Kids drinking.

But that's a funny thing. We worked on juveniles and you get a kid kick over the traces a little bit and some of them get liquor and drink, and take them home and go see the family in the morning. That's where we made a mistake. You want a battle, you want to take a young kid home to his father and mother at night and tell them the story, and then go in the morning and see them.

That got pretty tough. So we finally had to change our tactics with that, by calling them on the telephone. One o'clock, two o'clock, sometimes three o'clock in the morning. Your son or daughter or whoever they might be are in the police station. Come up and get 'em.

And then when they come in, they say, well, here we are. If it's a boy or a girl or whoever they were, you tell your parents what happened. We'd keep our mouth shut and say nothing. Boy, that worked. Because you take a kid home at night and the next morning you down your neck. They won't believe my boy is doin' those things. Oh, no, he didn't do it. So by working that way, . Get them out of bed and get down there.

We had a woman move from Orleans. She had two boys. Half brothers, that's what they were.

And we had them down in the office one night, Bob and I. Oh, it was around two o'clock, I guess. Called their folks, and they came down from Orleans to get 'em. The boys' mother was

. I made the boys tell 'em why they were there, and she says, you fellows are the scum of Eastham in a blue uniform. And, boy, she went out of that office like she was shot out or she'd been thrown up those stairs behind her. But she could climb stairs pretty fast, I'm telling you. I couldn't catch her. you stay out.

Yeah, scum of ~~W~~ Eastham in blue uniforms. That's a respectable citizen. Got to respect those kind of people.

Q: Was there ever anything like arson, like we have today?

Knowles: No, we never had much of that stuff. We had a few breaks, not too bad, .

Q: We don't have it in Eastham, but I mean on the Cape it's sometimes a problem.

Knowles: Things is somewhat different today. My God! I mean, we could get results and very good. The courts were good.

Q: How did you prosecute people? Did you have to go to Barnstable?

Or was their a Circuit Judge?

Knowles: Well, we never locked them up. We hated to lock them up. Of course, Orleans, after they got their station there, used to have to take 'em to Provincetown. The court used to be three days in Provincetown and three in Harwich. What was that-- Monday, Wednesday and Friday, I guess, in Harwich, and Tuesday, Thursdays, and Saturdays down in Provincetown, in that respect, till finally they got the new courthouse up here.

Q: Did you ever have to lock anybody up?

Knowles: Did I ever lock anybody up? Oh yeah, we locked plenty of 'em up.

Q: Where did you lock them up then?

Knowles: . And I pulled one one night. Lock 'em up in Provincetown, if the court the next morning was Provincetown, we'd go down there. If it was over to Harwich, we'd go to Dennis.

I got a fellow who was one night. He was speeding pretty hard, and, oh, he was a big boy. Thought he was. And I had to take him over to Dennis. And I had notified. Checked on it first and took him over add locked him up.

Well, now, they'd just put him in the cell, when I got the call from Orleans. They'd just closed the door, and they had recorded him. His brother had just come into the Orleans office

to pay for his bond and release. I talked with the Orleans officer. Well, I figured that to save his brother from coming over there, way over to Dennis from Orleans-- I had to go home anyway, I come home. So I took him and carried him home, which was very much against the law. After he'd been locked up, I took him out without any release, and I said to the Judge-- he give me a little calldown on it-- I said, I know I'm . But I said,

damn fool. He said, make somebody drive over there and get him and give him bail, when I was going home anyway, and he had to go back home. So why not take him?

Well, I got a little warning on that. Don't let it happen again. No, guess I won't.

Q: You were just being kind actually.

Knowles: But those days, they used to put them out on bail. Very seldom that they do now.

Christ, they put you a hundred thousand dollars. Well, if a guy doesn't show, how you going to get the hundred thousand? If these guys-- like the dope outfit ~~y~~ we got. Four out of the six are gone. The Judge ought to know. He let 'em go on personal recognizance, a hundred thousand dollars.

Q: ~~When~~ Was there any kind of ~~dope~~ dope problem when you were Police Chief?

Knowles: Any dope?

Q: Yes.

Knowles: We never~~X~~ had that. Dope wasn't around in those days.

Beer and stuff, that's all. But that's terrible now. I don't want no part of that stuff.

And you take that one case that they had down there. They got another one too. We worked a year on that case.

It's no good unless you get to the top of the ladder. Sure, you buy some stuff. Well, who'd you buy it? Oh, so-and-so. That doesn't mean anything. You've got to get the guy who's

. And they chased that guy, my God, all the way from Colombia Kingsbury Beach. They get into Logan Airport over in Boston and the boys were right there.

Q: This is a recent case you're talking about?

Knowles: Yes. They were right there, and they saw them get into the car and they followed the car right on over here to Kingsbury Beach.

Now, one of those guys has been picked up in Florida on another charge. That's one thing that the broadcasting system on the is wonderful.

They got him for selling, going through the national records. They found that there was a warrant out for his arrest. Failure to appear in court.

Now they come out-- the District Attorney of the state made the statement here not long ago, when they got him, it might be a year

office and get him to sign the Governor's warrant. .

And we sent it out to the State Police in Connecticut. We always asked for a high bail. If we put a high bail on it, make sure they can't get it. They have to lock him up and .

And called back and he was being in court a certain night, so we went out to court. That was in 1960. When we got out there, the State Police, gee, he says, I'm sorry. He says, the Governor hasn't signed the warrant yet. He said, he's down in Florida campaigning for John Kennedy for President.

What'd you call us for, I says, 'cause I thought he'd signed the warrant. So we had to go out three times to get that guy. And that's the stuff you have to go through. But I don't know, I think down there thing's changing. Near as I can figure out, this case in Florida was quite serious and I think they're going to prosecute him first. By the time they get through with him down there, then they grab him up here.

Q: In the meantime, he's on ice anyway. He's not going to do any damage.

Now, when you think about the years that you were Moderator for the Town, when did you begin to be Moderator and how did you become Moderator? What made you decide? I think you said once before it was 1933 when you started. What's the story behind that? How does one decide to be Town Moderator?

Knowles: Well, I don't remember how it was decided. I guess I

wanted something to do, more than anything. They paid good money. They paid ten dollars a year, if I remember right.

Foster

Just how I decided-- I'm trying to think what-- fussed around with that thing as Moderator. He gave it up. I don't know, I guess more than anything the decision I made was I was more or less interested in town life. And our Town By-Laws, I don't think any other ~~town~~ town on Cape Cod has its Town By-Laws like Eastham has, because Eastham's a nice little town, but it seems to me a little bit different than other towns.

The Town By-Laws says that Town Meetings are to be conducted under the Roberts' Manual and Cushing's Manual of Parliamentary Law. That's what I mean, it's tough to be conducted under. Now, most of the towns, they don't just have those. The Moderator is the full authority. Well, at that time I'd been more familiar with

~~Falmouth~~ Falmouth or what

.

And I guess when this guy got through-- Foster was a good brain, he knew the laws pretty well, and I knew the Parliamentary Law, so I didn't have much to worry about. And I run for it, but I don't know, sometimes-- they didn't like me very well sometimes.

Q: Who would "they" be?

Knowles: Funny about that, isn't it? (LAUGHTER) That's why I said in the book, I always like a door in the back of the stage, I'd like a door so you can get out in a hurry.

Q: In 1933, when you began, what were the first big issues you

remember? As Moderator?

Knowles: The first issue?

Q: Yes. I mean not the very first one, but what were the big topics of discussion in those years?

Knowles: Well, the big discussion most any time means the budget. Of course, that was Rule 12. I don't know why 12 Rule 12 in Town Meeting. But there's other Rules and Regulations according to Parliamentary-- that's why I say, I guess these people have to have him. Every time you see a picture, they've got a Town Counsel sitting alongside of them.

But the old-timers, , didn't have to have any Town Counsel. in those days too. They started the Town Report, boy, you get something going.

And little different things would happen. One night we had a discussion on there, and I had a recess for fifteen minutes. Let everybody talk, and see what we can come up with. One of those touchy things, you know. And they were finally called to order and I called to give a report and put it to a vote. And before we got up to go out, and disturbance in the hall and . And they give me quite an argument, so I had to go down there. Then I opened . I said, the law is, when you get ready to vote, nobody gets up and leaves till after the vote. I saw they'd been out fifteen minutes discussing.

a man getting up and going right out again.
It interfered with the votes.

And he got pretty much out of line. I opened the door. I said, look, the door's open. You step through it and you'll be under arrest. I locked you up in the ante-room. The Constable was

Then I'll decide whether I'll lock you up or let you go home. I opened the door and I said, now it's up to you what you're going to do. He went back and ~~he~~ sat down.

And those are the things that started things against you a little bit. You know. And I was only going by Parliamentary Law.

Now, on the other hand, a Moderator has an awful lot of authority of his own. What he says is law. And you can find him in court and I don't think anyone ever won a case.

because they got the law.

And it seems a long time sometimes.

Now they had things in there. Only happened to me once in sixteen years, and it's funny-- what's his name, Earle, Moderator now? I think it's his first year. And the next morning after Town Meeting, three guys come down to see me. They thought he'd made a mistake in voting last night, and they wanted to know, so they asked me about it. And it struck me kind of funny. I said, look, he's right. They said he took three votes on something and they thought one was enough, and now he's taking three. I said, he's right.

And the funny thing, in sixteen years I had that one particular

thing once, and he got it on the very first meeting. An amendment on an amendment. Took three votes to put it through. And they thought because they voted once, that's all that was necessary.

And I said, my God,

but I found out since-- I don't know the man-- that he isn't quite as up to snuff as he thought he was. I don't/^{know}the man. I wouldn't know him if he walked in here, but some of the guys that go to Town Meeting, he's not liked too well because he's-- I don't know, Sadie, he tries to be funny. Makes a lot of remarks.

Sadie Flint: He's an actor.

Knowles: Now the other night at Town Meeting-- I wasn't there, but I was told how Maurice-- you know what Maurice Moore will do at Town Meeting. Poor guy, he's always against everything, and one night he voted for something. Everybody stood up and clapped their hands and gave him a big hand, because he voted for something.

(LAUGHTER) But with that, I'm going to .
But he has some good ideas. A lot of time you can't get a vote on it, because he objects to everything that comes up. You know.

And so the other night, I was told that Maurice was .
When he got through, the Moderator made some kind of a joke about what he said, and after he got all through, he turned around and says, I didn't appreciate your joke.

And that was something to me-- it's business.
damn fool business.

But we had a lot of things like that. So I went back-- they

wanted to get me out of there and it didn't take much trouble to do it, because the people that put you in can put you out sometimes. I lost out by one vote. You know Mr.

?

TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

Knowles: To help the thing get along a little bit. He didn't know anything about being Moderator, and put the frosting ~~z~~ on the cake and out nice. He asked me to be his right-hand teller. the right-hand teller takes the Moderator's place when he wants to talk. And they got to get him, anyway.

He beat me by one vote. The Selectmen asked me to run against him and then they go and they kind of turn the tables and went for him.

So it came along, Ralph Chase was the Moderator, and they asked me to run again. And I said, sure, I'll run. Got the nomination papers and got them signed. They kept saying, you haven't turned your papers in. I don't intend to. Why? I said, I'm going to get this one on a platter or else I don't run. ~~Te~~ They said, what do you mean? I'm not going to turn the nomination papers in until I'm damn sure that no one else is. Just a few minutes before five o'clock. They'll be there in just a couple of minutes. If anyone else turns in, I'm all through. I want you to pass it to me this time.

Well, I got it, but it was interesting. Interesting, because-- I don't know. I guess in Town

Meeting. I'd been Moderator. I don't think they found much fault with me. Sometimes they go against people. They think they're no good anyway.

They had-- when we had our celebration on the three hundredth anniversary night, the Mayor of England was over Town Meeting, and I passed the gavel to him. Maurice Moore came after me when we got through. Just before we got through, Maurice said something, you know, about some Rules and Regulations, and I says, you're out of order. said, that was a fast one, that shut him up quick, didn't it?

But you hear a lot of interesting things and a lot of times-- you know Mr. Harry Young, don't you? He questioned me one ~~day~~ night on a decision. Now, the Moderator is in charge of all balloting, and the only honest ballot you can get in any Town Meeting or anything else you want an honest one, is a paper ballot.

And we had something quite serious there one night. The tellers had passed around the paper ballots and the paper ballots were strictly Yes and No. When you get them, you tear off which one you want.

Mr. Young made a motion to-- everybody raising their right hand. I ruled him out of order. Well, that night they had a-- I don't know, some committee had a lawyer from Hyannis at the meeting for some cause, I don't know just what it was. And I says to Mr. Young, you're out of order. He said, well, he had a Manual in his hand, and he says, well, it says right here. I said, no, you're out of order just the same. And he said, well, I'd like

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to have Lawyer So-and-So to explain this, if it's permissible. I says, as far as I'm concerned, if nobody objects.

So when he came down the aisle, I passed him Roberts Manual. Why, he says, you don't know what it is. No Moderator knows these things. Read it. If I'm right, you go back and sit down. And if you say I'm wrong, why, you're .

Now Mr. Young was in the wrong. All he had to do was turn his page over. In that Parliamentary Law, you read something. Everything is in there, from the Senate in Washington and every damn thing you can think of is in there, but you have to figure out what ~~XXXX~~ takes Town Meeting. Now he started on the wrong page. That was some other section.

Q: Did the lawyer back you up then?

Knowles: He passed me back the book and sat down. And on that, some people disagree with me on that, because that's the only honest vote you can get. So you take it this way. Fred and I had a . Fred didn't believe that a raise of hands was an honest vote.

It's interesting to a Moderator. You're watching the audience. Some people at first don't notice it. I happen to. When you say all those in favor raise their hands and hold, they're still counting, and you see people sit there, you know, and they're-- now we're all right. They vote the way somebody else votes. But they don't until they see certain people, a certain person. And when they see it, they're satisfied,

they're voting right or not, they're voting like that guy. That isn't true of all of them.

Q: So you think a secret one is the only way?

Knowles: A secret ballot. You get up to that old box and you got to either Yes or No. Nobody knows it .
Lot of people didn't like that too well, but like it or not, it's anonymous votes.

Q: How many times did you use a ballot in a Town Meeting? More than once? Just on the big issues?

Knowles: I don't think we ever used it at any one special meeting more than once, and I only used that on something real serious.

Q: That there was a sharp division on?

Knowles: When we wanted an honest vote, that's all.

Q: What kinds of problems do you recall? I know before we started the tape, you had mentioned the school debate? What year was this? The school debate? People got very excited about the elementary school. What year was this, do you remember?

Knowles: Well, it seems to me it was about every year we were doing something with the schools, but that really started on the elementary school. The little Historical house up there was the school we started on.

They started out by appropriating money and the government was

going to pay. So after seven months, the government hadn't answered the letter. This was back in '33. That's when it started. We got the school in '36.

Then we had to change that. The Town decided we'd do it ourselves, and they had a meeting about it. So it come up, they had a special meeting. They had to rescind the vote that was taken on the annual Town Meeting to contact the .

So Fred --you knew Fred, didn't you?

? And it came in that meeting.

He made a motion to rescind all about this building committee.

I said, you can't do that. When you go to rescind any action change at Town Meeting, you've got to rescind everything.

Well, they were afraid at that time that I was going to put a certain man in as chairman.

certain guy, but they thought this other guy in there was

forever. So Foster gets up and makes a motion that we appoint a committee, the Moderator appoint a committee, the first one was chairman of the School Board. And the next one we want a man, and the next one was a contractor and builder, and the fifth one would be from the floor. So how could anybody-- and the motion as to who was chairman .

And they had a hell of a time about that, because they told Foster that I was working against Foster and he wasn't on the committee, he was making the motion.

So they finally come out and they got to arguing this and that and all told, they couldn't come up with anything.

Then someone made a motion, he'd come down and asked me if he made a motion of putting the old Building Committee, would I accept it? And now this had been pretty near an hour of debate on that thing, you know, because they named him from the floor. They had all kinds of reasons how you're going to get those fellows in there, see. And I said, I'll accept it if no one objects to it.

The guy I figured was going to object to it kept his mouth shut. I was hoping he would.

So finally they got it through. Then there was different things that was happening. We had this special In two years, over ~~12/111~~ that schoolhouse, we had ten Town Meetings in two years. And then it was voted-- in 1936 it was voted to ~~do~~ build ~~that~~ it.

On the high school there, we had trouble. Orleans was a very jealous town of Eastham. They were jealous of Eastham terribly. And they wanted that high school in Orleans. You remember

weren't you?

What's his name now? The fellow who made the squawk about that every time? I think it was the third meeting we had to vote on to get the original school. 'Cause this guy made a-- stalling, hoping that Orleans could come up, but Eastham had the acreage and Orleans didn't. So we finally-- I think it was the fourth time we ~~had~~ had to vote on that school. But there's ~~always~~ always more or

less a feeling of the two towns, you know, over the years.

We tried some years ago go get Orleans kicked out of the Bay, out of Eastham. We started at Wellfleet on the fishing in the Bay. We got rid of Wellfleet. Then we started getting Orleans out. One Eastham voted not to do it and that was all they needed. Had to be a unanimous vote for the State House. This one Eastham fellow voted not to take them out. 'Cause Orleans has very little water frontage in the Bay. Very, very little.

But the two towns have been together all the years. I understand now, Sadie, that some of the records, old records, have been taped or something. Orleans going to give them back to Eastham. I don't know when, but I think they were

. They've been working on a lot of that old stuff. See, when they set Orleans aside, 'cause ~~of~~ the biggest part of what we call the ^{Eastham} ~~Orleans~~ population was on that side, when they separated, and, of course, they kept all the records. I think they had a fire one time, didn't they? Before our time.

Sadie Flint: Yes, they did.

Knowles: And some of those records were burned. I think said a while back, last fall, that she thought a lot of those records most of the towns were putting old records on tape,

.

Q: Has there been a gentle rivalry though between the two towns always? Or more than gentle?

Q: Did she make that correction?

Knowles: Well, she says, we was checking the records. The records show that I died some years ago. I says, my God, that's it. I says, I knew there was something the matter with me, but damned if I knew what it was. Now I know. (LAUGHTER) I've been walking around saving save funeral expenses. I said, what's the date? That they had there on that? And she said, they didn't put the date down. I know it's all cleaned up nice now. But they guy ~~that~~ that they put on that was dead, he was living still. I said, my God, you're smart people up there.

So that went on. The town voted, when I retired, they were very nice, the town. The town treats me very good. I have no complaints of the town as a whole. They've been very good to me.

Unbeknown to me, because my wife was sick at that time, I didn't get

they got the annuity. They knew I didn't have a Social Security pension. I mean, a town pension. When they came out in '38 with this town insurance and pension, you saved five per cent of your salary. I said, no,

the town, I've did a lot of work and been on the town payroll a long time and different things, but as far as any police work is concerned, so quite a few of us signed the release on it. I mean, we'd go without it. Just the insurance .

So they sent in a bill to the State House and got annuity for me. They asked for three thousand dollars, and the law wouldn't allow that. They'd have to vote on it and make a law out of it, the state. They voted for two thousand, and that's a big help, I'm telling you.

So that went along. So here last fall, Howard Quinn was talking about it. He says, we want to see if we can get a rise in ~~M~~ Winnie's annuity. Which was nice of him. And so Howard says to me-- find out if he wants it. Sure.

Q: I should say. You certainly had earned it.

Knowles: But, he says, he'll have to ask for it. All right. So Howard wants an answer. He says if you want that increase, you'll have to ask for it. Well, I said, yes, go ahead, I'll ask for it two or three times.

So that went on. It was last fall, and the day I was in the Town Hall about the-- in the paper there, when she was telling me, the woman there was telling me about in the paper-- I get a call from the State House. They evidently had put the petition in, and one of the Senators up there had noticed that the name was different. And, gee, something's wrong here. So he looked up the old record which happened in '68, and that one was right. There was a difference in the name. So they called me to get a correction on it, see what was what. And the name, instead

of Winfred Knowles, which people-- I had a hell of a time with that stuff all my life-- the name Winifred.

Q: An extra "i"?

Knowles: And he said, this guy

I know there's something wrong there. And he said, So-and-So wants to talk to you. Put your badge on and get up there to that Town Clerk and tell her you're taking her in for falsifying records or doing some damn thing.

Q: So did they pass it then?

Knowles: So I went up to the Town Hall, that's when I got after her, and I said, you've got a nice bunch of people up here. They keep records so straight. Nothing ever happens. And she told me, I'll show you the book. But, I says, you knew when you saw it, that I was still around. Gosh, I was going out to dinner with you one day last summer. You must have known I was still alive, or I thought I was. I don't know, maybe I wasn't. I made a mistake of going out with you again. (LAUGHTER)

Then I says, furthermore, Lillian-- this is the Town Clerk, she's a nice person. And I says, I've been told by a Senator up at the State House that-- a couple of hours ago-- to put my badge on and take you in for falsifying records or something. She said, what do you mean? I said, my annuity. Got the wrong name. She said, I didn't have anything to do with that. Well, somewhere along, the Town Clerk must have-- She said, the Selectmen handle

that, that's their business, and they pass it to me to mail it. She probably put the letter in "Five Days, Return Town Clerk". I don't know. Jeez, I said, I knew those people were so smart in there.

But in the Town Meeting the other night it was explained, something about a delay on it, so it'll have to wait till next year now. Delay on it. And I said to Barbara, I'm going up to Town Hall some day and I'm going to ask those Selectmen a lot of questions. I want to get all three of them now and ask them a lot of questions. And see what they're-- why don't they give us a reason. And they said, well, there's been a delay on that. Why don't you ask them? Why the delay? They started last fall. There shouldn't be any delay, unless they had a wrong name. And I had just taken for granted that that was one thing and they'd passed it. It wouldn't have done anybody any good. There's no such thing as a Winifred Knowles anyway. That's a lady's name. And I had a lot of trouble, people thought I was a girl. Heaven knows I never acted like one, but-- . Now, at the present time, they're not right on mine. A long time getting them right.

And I don't understand these things. Give me your address. My name on the register is Winfred J. Knowles. They send all my checks just Winfred Knowles. Now that's all right ordinary, but just the way things are sometimes, and we have a sense of doing things right or wrong. Someone should go in there, some trouble, something about a check maybe somewhere, we want to check the records of Winfred J. Knowles. There's no record in there of

Winfred J. Knowles being about. It's all Winfred Knowles. You know, those little things. And then they come out-- a lot of people come out and they do that with the mail. A mailing address would be RRL. My box is 280. A lot of these people put RRL, no box number.

Q: Taking short cuts?

KNOWLES: I don't know. What are they saving? Now, the question of that, a letter come the other day and it was written by the

. RRL, Box 280 was written on the other side of the envelope. It must have been put on by a clerk in the postoffice, ~~by~~ because the new clerk, -- the driver in the morning picks up the mail and all she looks for is RRL, and after she gets all of that out, then she puts them in box number.

Of course, people around there , when you get a green slip in the postoffice , that letter can be put in a .

Q: ?

Knowles: I've seen so much of that. They leave something out.

Q: I can believe that your records in the Police Department were very accurate.

To tie up the Moderator, you did sixteen years all together in two separate pieces?

Knowles: Yes.

Q: Starting in 1933 and ending-- ?

Knowles: Well, it must have been in the late thirties, to start with, because I started in '46 and ended in '54.

Q: '46 to '54 were the last ones?

Knowles: That was nine years. So I took it through a few years in the middle thirties.

Q: Was the National Seashore debate during that time?

Knowles: No.

Q: It was after that. Right.

Knowles: That came around 1960. Now, when I was appointed Chief of Police, that was in '54, I was still Moderator then. Bernard Collins was Selectman, and he says, are you still going to be Moderator or what you gonna do? Well, I says, no law says I can't handle both jobs, Moderator and Chief of Police, but it's up to you fellows. Well, they thought it'd be better if I dropped the Moderator's job. Well, I said, naturally, it's only ten dollars a year for that.

So it went on through the years and they got disgusted with what they had and they wanted me to run again. And Bernard Collins-- well, you know, he says, that you can be Chief of Police and you can be Moderator. I says, I told you that long ago, but you didn't

want me, so I guess I won't run any more.

Q: So that was that.

Knowles: That was that one.

Q: I wanted to ask you about the Grange too, so that we could get a full picture of that. When we ended the last tape, you were talking about being-- was it the Master of the Grange for the whole Cape? For Eastham?

Knowles: Well, when I was first appointed, I was pretty young that day. I was stagestruck at the time.

Q: Was this when you were Examiner? Is that what you called it?

Knowles: That was the end. In 1916 and '17 I was the Master. In 1919 I was elected again. In 1924 I was the Master. It was in 1924, a few days before Christmas, I had a letter from the Massachusetts State Grange, Charles Gardiner. He was what you call the high priest of the Grange. That I had been appointed as an Inspecting Deputy, providing I could pass the examination.

Q: And you told us about passing it on the last tape. That was very good. That was very exciting. And did that mean for the whole Cape?

Knowles: That meant for the whole state. There's only thirty-two
Deputies in the Grange, the State Grange, for the whole state. And
our friend, said to me when I said

something about my being appointed providing I could pass the examination-- and I went up on a Sunday, New Year's Day. Not a Sunday, but New Year's Day, whenever that was. And the Hotel, Hotel Belmont, eight o'clock in the morning. Half an hour for lunch, got through the examination about five in the afternoon.

And, you know, Fred says to me-- he says, you know-- I think Fred might have been looking for that job. I don't know how I got it, Sadie. I never knew. It had to be someone. Maybe the record as a Master, I don't know.

Q: I suspect you were the best Master.

Knowles: Fred says, you know, you're gonna have that job, you got to be a millionaire. I says, that's right, Fred. I've made arrangements, I'm going to hire a million dollars, so I can be a millionaire. It was a two-year appointment, but it ordinarily took four years. They generally appoint the Master for two more years. And I had, I think-- what was it? Fourteen or fifteen. I had seven or eight the first year. That was under my official chair. And the next year I had the balance. I had to go off the Cape, go up to Middleboro

down in Worcester. Like those fellows from up there that have to come down here.

So Fred says to me soon after that, he says, I still don't quite understand how you got that. I said, I'll tell you, a lot

of people-- I'm stupid. I'll admit I'm stupid. I don't know any different. I says, but to prove the point to you, I'll let you see the report cards I passed at the time. He never mentioned it again.

Q: He knew that you knew your business. I'd love to hear what the Grange was like.

Knowles: Well, the Grange was a national farm association, and the biggest Grange in this state was in the city of Somerville. They brought them into the city, the farmers.

Q: Were these farmers that had moved to town?

Knowles: The Grange was a great thing. Community buying and things like . You could buy stuff very cheap. Order through the Grange. But I know I got almost kicked out of there one night, because everything was asparagus those days, you know. Had a chance to buy fertilizer for the asparagus for half the price of what the agents were getting. Buying by the carload, you know. And you could buy groceries or anything like that in combination. Buying and like that, and that's true of a farmers' organization. Boy, and when I come in and buy fertilizer for ~~1/2~~ half the price-- no, there were three fertilizer dealers in town, and boom, they put the pressure down.

Q: Did they stop you from doing it?

Knowles: Well, the Grange had the votes to do it. I bought it

for them and then they voted against it.

Q: Because they didn't want to ruffle feathers?

Knowles: At that time, you put these fertilizer dealers-- my God, with all the asparagus-- put them out of business. If you say you're gonna buy that, well, maybe that's the standing of it, it's corporate buying. Farm equipment and everything else.

they did a big job that way.

But the Grange down here got more or less a social thing.

Q: And what kinds of things happened with the social part of it?

Knowles: Oh, I don't know. They have entertainments and general things. They have harvest suppers and things like that.

Q: Did everybody bring a dish kind of supper?

Knowles: No. When there were harvest suppers, everybody would bring in vegetables and they all came in and bought them. But the best thing they ever did was to sponsor that chicken pie Christmas supper, wasn't it?

Q: Was that on Christmas Day?

Sadie Flint: The night before. Tell about the Agricultural Fair. Wasn't the Agricultural Fair under the Grange?

Knowles: Yes. The Grange and the Firemen worked on that together.

They had a big fair there once a year.

Q: Was this like a County Fair, only for Eastham alone?

Knowles: Sort of. They had booths way out in the parking lot. Put the stuff in it. Ran it for about three days. They had a little gambling thing on one end. They had something else. Full of cups or something, and you roll a ball. If you get it in a cup, , you might get a prize.

One Selectman was a very religious man and he complained, because he thought it was gambling. At the same time, he had a ticket in his pocket for a quilt, put on by the church. What's the difference?

Q: None at all, of course. What did he say? Did you point it out to him?

Knowles: No. It didn't make no difference. He made the complaint ~~and~~ we had to stop it, so we had to stop it.

Just the same as they stopped giving prizes at Whist parties. God, that's the way we used to make money then. Run Whist parties and give them for prizes and everything. I never got one. My luck in gambling and things like that, prizes and things, was happy medium. I never got a booby prize and I never got a first prize. (LAUGHTER)

Then we used to have a carnival come in. A nice outfit. And they had a woman way up there on the top pole. Jeez, you know-- did you ever see that one go? You know how the whole pole bends, swaying and ~~it~~ swinging? But when she got ready to come down, she

had a long line down there. We used to have to keep the space open, 'cause she was coming down by the neck. Boom, she'd be coming down there and these guys would catch her.

So that went on. The first year we did very well. And the next year it was a little tough, 'cause they had some slot machines. Gambling stuff. Course, they didn't amount to anything. It was just something-- everybody was in and out.

And I was talking with-- ~~Mary~~ Maurice Wiley was Chairman of the Selectmen-- the guy that runs it. There was a nice . And someone had complained about what they was doing, and Maurice says to me, you keep away from there. And that's what we agreed with the guy that was running it. I wasn't around there at all. Keep away from there. So I didn't go anywhere near. They got a-going that night and they stopped. Someone had put in a complaint.

And Maurice Wiley was a very nice guy in a way. He says, well, the Chief of Police knew it. He told me-- of course, at that time that that happened, I was working in the Police Department. He was the Chief, because I had that changed-- '56 I had that changed from Chapter 97 to Chapter 97-a. 97-a put full responsibility on the Chief. The Chief of Police controls the town. He has to make the ~~the~~ rules and regulations. They have to be acceptable to the Selectmen. And Mr. Wiley couldn't do that, so we didn't have any trouble getting that through, 97-a. And that's really the best thing, because Selectmen can't know the police work. Some of them try hard.

Q: Was he the Wiley of Wiley Park?

Knowles: Yes.

Q: That reminds me of the Timothy Smith will that's so often spoken of at Town Hall. I'd like to know who Timothy Smith was.

Knowles: Well, he was an Eastham man. Went in business in Boston.

Q: What kind of business?

Knowles: Food storage?

Sadie Flint: Hardware store, wasn't it?

Knowles: Hardware store. Something anyway. And he give the money for the Hall, to build this Hall. And the^{day of} dedication, Ed Williams made a mistake. He had a plan made, but he cut it down. He didn't realize that during the dedication there were so many people they couldn't all get in.

And this Timothy Smith Fund was put in-- I think they put in twenty-five thousand dollars in a Fund for educating children. Now what I mean by that, the interest from that could be used for your boy or my boy or whoever it might be. Some child that wanted to go to school could get a ^{loan} ~~XXXX~~ from that fund. Now as I remember that thing really, they'd have the loan, they'd start paying back when they finished their schooling, something like that.

Now on that thing is the-- so much of that is to older people for some reason or other, although I never got a gift of it. Just wasn't old enough. Got to be old to get that.

in between the fire station built on and built on. They had a north wing on, they put a south wing on it, and nothing carried through.

But I always said then, take your old Hall, fix it into office. But they didn't, and ~~XX~~ so they voted the last Town Meeting and Bob Erickson and and the next morning jumped in the car and went to Hyannis. And they come back and they moved stuff out on that side of the hall to make room, and somebody come in and said, what are you doing? Well, the town didn't vote for office space last night, so we're going to make it today. And when it come night, that night, then the whole town-- everything was on that side of the hall, was office space. Nobody said anything.

Now she comes in on ramps and other things, and , making the stairs down. New stairs, double stairs, this and that. Says, I don't know, but I understand that Mrs. the lawyers changed it somehow, I don't know. That's a major operation,

. That ten per cent they can use for maintenance. Something like that. But when it comes to-- they haven't got any right to order that hall be changed. She said they had. That's a town building.

Q: So the town would have to vote?

Knowles: And the town would have to vote to do it. Course, they voted not to have it, and the Selectmen ~~XX~~ went ahead and got it,

and I said one day, I was a member of the Selectmen. You know where the Selectmen have their office in there? On the side? Had a glass frame around there, you know.

Q: I want to ask you what kind of person Timothy Smith was. I don't have a picture for him.

Knowles: There's a picture in the Hall, I think.

Q: What kind of person was he though? How do you remember him?

Knowles: Well, I don't know. I never knew too much about him. I was kind of young those days.

Q: And he had left to go to Boston?

Knowles: Yes, he ^{give that to} ~~left~~ the town and then he admitted he had made a mistake, because it's smaller.

Q: He should have made a larger one from the beginning?

Sadie Flint: He lost all his family, his own family. So he helped his niece go through school, and then gave his money for the people in Eastham.

Q: I think it's marvelous that he did that. Certainly is a memorial to him.

Sadie Flint: There's a picture in the Town Hall. One at the Museum too.

Knowles: You know, to go back to that again,

I always felt pretty good about that.

Q: I would think you would.

Knowles: When you get thirty-two men in the whole business and you're one of them.

Q: I would feel that was probably the most honor that you ever had.

Knowles: But that ^{Grange changed,} ~~bring change~~ Sadie. The last time I was Master in 1935, they started to get two different sets.

Q: What do you mean?

Knowles: Well, I mean-- my wife was Master of Third Degree ladies. I don't know, was she Master of the Third Degree when you was Master of ? I don't know.

Sadie Flint: I don't remember.

Knowles: But anyway, you ask certain people. Now, the Third Degree are all ladies and there are about seventeen members in that Third Degree. That is, . And the last time they met in 1935, she had . Now when you get three, four, five-- five persons, people don't have to say anything in that Degree, but just sit in a chair. You have to sit five men but a certain one on the other side of the house could ^{get} everybody ^{got} ~~for~~ in there . That

and kind of wrecked the works in my mind.

I sit in the office there-- what was it?-- twenty-six years, I think. Somebody from the local Grange, the State Grange, or something came in, and I took a vacation. Oh, I'd been out pretty near a year, I guess. A knock on the door one night, and a man and his wife and another man came to the door, came in, and wanted to know if I'd thought anything about coming back to the Grange. And I said yes. I said, a year's vacation you should go back. And I said, I think I got an application. I'll do it the next meeting.

Now I thought they were sent there by the Grange. Maybe they were, I don't know. It didn't appear to me as if they were. If they were sent there by the Grange. We used to do that. I did that one time. I took a hundred members, got ninety-nine of them back. I don't know if you remember that or not. One man got mad at me. He didn't get back in. He got mad and I cut him off anyway.

And they come down, and, oh, that was wonderful. Well, now under the circumstances, I was under the impression they was pleased to think we were going to come back in the Grange. They got ready to go out

and he says to the other fellow. He says, well, ^{now} we've got somebody who'll take care of Mrs. . You know who I mean, don't you?

Sadie Flint: Yes, I do.

Knowles: I said, what you say? Well, He said, now we got somebody

who'll take care of Mrs. . He said, you always got along with her very well, didn't you? I said, I didn't get along with her any different than any other. She's got guts enough to stand up. So that's why you're down here. You don't want my wife and I back for--

Q: For your sake.

Knowles: For the Grange. You want my wife and I so that I can handle Mrs. and you can be nice to her. You've gotta know these . You do. Sure, you can get her back. You can handle her just as well as I can. I never did anything to Mrs. what the town voted for.

And you can do the same if you've got the stomach. But you haven't got the stomach. You'd rather I do it and you shake hands with her and tell her how glad you are to see her. (LAUGHTER)

Q; But did you not go back?

Knowles: I said, , I was going to come back, but
If
never. /That's all I was wanted for, is try to control somebody.
I've got no more to do with it. Yes, no more to do with that. I said, now the door's open, so get out. Jeez!

Q: So that was the Grange then, right there in a nutshell, right?

Knowles: And you'd be surprised to know who they were.

Sadie Flint: I imagine I would.

Knowles: square shouldered people.

Sadie Flint: I know Mrs. Whiting.

Knowles: (LAUGHTER) She was all right. The trouble was-- I don't know. to settle down. That's all right.

It's a funny thing. People are like that. Get someone else to do it for you.

Q: It's ^{known} ~~not~~ as a hatchet man usually.

Knowles: You know Harold , was on the Finance Committee, and he set next to the Master and I give him a tap on the arm. Harold, do this or do that. Well, I got a little tired of that after a while. I thought, I'll get his goat some night.

and I says, okay. I dropped the gavel and I said, Mr. has something to say to the Grange. And~~h~~ he never tapped my arm again.

(LAUGHTER) You've been through that.

Sadie Flint: I know.

Knowles: It's amazing how so many people get to do things.

Q: Right. I think you saw through a lot of people in all your years. Well, we appreciate your giving another whole ninety minutes of your time, and giving us a picture of-- .

Knowles: Well, it was nice of you to come out. I got nothing

else to do.

Q: Well, the town's appreciation of you, I'm glad that it's shown, because it's--

Knowles: But the whole story is actually about the town. It's treated me very well.

And it's nice sometimes-- while I haven't lately, because I haven't been out for some time this year-- but it's nice to meet some of you. I know them by seeing them, but not the names of a lot of people. I know I had a lot of guys just come to me-- why don't you try moderating again? And a lot of people-- it's too bad you're not out on the highway somewhere.

And it gives you a little personal feeling that you did some of these things.

Q: And that your name seems to be symonymous with being fair and serving the town.

Knowles: I always figured that I had a job to do and certain things used to rile me up. Now, all these years, I never fixed a ticket. Get calls from fellows. Even get a call from the State House, over a guy I stopped one day. Passed a school bus down~~l~~ in North Eastham. Oh, big boy, big

(END OF TAPE)